

# Stella By Starlight



By

Sharon M. Draper

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

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**About the author:** Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit [novelstudies.org](http://novelstudies.org).

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## Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on five chapters of *Stella By Starlight* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A portfolio cover (p. 7) as well as a Checklist (p. 6) are included so that students may track their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

### Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

**Themes** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include racism and tolerance, the importance of community, courage, heroism and sacrifice, friendship, personal growth.

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## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

### Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

### Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

### Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

### Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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## Synopsis

Stella lives in the segregated south – in Bumblebee, North Carolina, to be exact about it. Some stores she can go into. Some stores she can't. Some folks are right pleasant. Others are a lot less. To Stella, it sort of evens out, and heck, the Klan hasn't bothered them for years. But one late night, later than she should ever be up, much less wandering around outside, Stella and her little brother see something that they're never supposed to see, something that is the first flicker of change to come, change not welcome by any stretch of the imagination. As Stella's community – her world – is upended, she decides to fight fire with fire, and learns that ashes don't necessarily signify the end. [Courtesy of the publisher]

## Author Biography

*Sharon M. Draper*

Sharon M. Draper is a two-time Coretta Scott King Award-winning author, most recently for ***Copper Sun***, and previously for ***Forged by Fire***. She's also the recipient of the 2012 Jeremiah Ludington Award, which recognizes lifetime achievement in children's literature, as well as the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Author Award for New Talent for ***Tears of a Tiger*** and Coretta Scott King Author Honors for ***The Battle of Jericho*** and ***November Blues***. Her other books include ***Just Another Hero***, ***Romiette and Julio***, ***Darkness Before Dawn***, and ***Double Dutch***. She lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she taught high school English for 25 years. For more information, visit her online at [www.sharondraper.com](http://www.sharondraper.com) [Biography courtesy of the publisher]





# Stella By Starlight



*By Sharon M. Draper*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Stella By Starlight

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## Chapters 1-5



### Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Stella By Starlight* is Stella Mills who lives in the small town of Bumblebee, North Carolina during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. Who would you say is your *most favorite* character ever? What made you select this character?




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

dependable	sharecropper	admonished	ventured
hesitant	hearth	skylarking	resentment

1. Mama scolded the children for \_\_\_\_\_ after she'd asked them to clean up.
2. Johanna was the most \_\_\_\_\_ student in our class.
3. We all crowded around the \_\_\_\_\_ while we listened to Grandpa's tall tale.
4. After only an hour the sheep \_\_\_\_\_ too close to the electric fence.
5. My great grandfather was only a poor \_\_\_\_\_ during the Great Depression.
6. I was \_\_\_\_\_ to accept his offer until you told me he could be trusted.
7. Kelvin was filled with \_\_\_\_\_ when his older brother broke his bike.
8. I had never been \_\_\_\_\_ by Principal Gasper until she caught me making that snowball.



# Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One.


2. Investigate: The **Ku Klux Klan** strike terror into the hearts of Stella and Jojo. Using resources in your school library or the Internet, research two interesting facts about this organization. Be prepared to share your investigation with others in your class.

1.	
2.	

3. What unwritten rule did every Negro family in Bumblebee know?


4. Which member of the community was Stella sure was a member of the Ku Klux Klan? How did she know this?


5. Tony's father was the principal of the local school. True or False

6. Why didn't Stella want to write about the Ku Klux Klan?


7. What did Stella's family do with the newspapers they had read? Why do you think they did this?

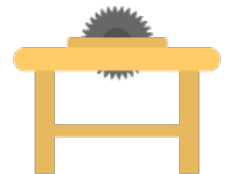

8. Despite all the bad things the Klan did, Stella's mom says that catching the Klan is *kinda like nailing jelly to a tree*. Why do you think this was the case?


## Language Activities



### A. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first five chapters of *Stella By Starlight*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
bread		Unclad.
shoes		Fire fighters have need of these.
toenails		High feelings.
worse		Oops - watch your mouth!
small		Large buildings with a number of stores.
silent		Heed.
stone		You might take these in class.

Now find two additional words from the first five chapters which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

Word	Anagram	Clue

## B. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates Courage.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is the first four lines of the famous poem, **Brave**, written by the famous poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*I sure am brave, I'll have you know,  
My Great Aunt Mable told me so.  
I caught a leech and then a snake,  
And chowed them down, for goodness sake!*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - A - B - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBA, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first five chapters of our novel (like **courage** or **fear**).

### The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: \_\_\_\_\_


### Bonus Question.

In the above poem why do you think the poet used the word *caught* instead of *caught*?


## C. Cliffhanger

Chapter One contains an important literary device called a **cliffhanger**. A cliffhanger usually occurs at the end of a chapter when the author leaves the reader in suspense. How is this true in Chapter One? Why do you think the author ended the chapter this way?




**D.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter Two is: *Papa had run outside fast as a shot to see for himself...*

~ What is being compared in this example?

--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

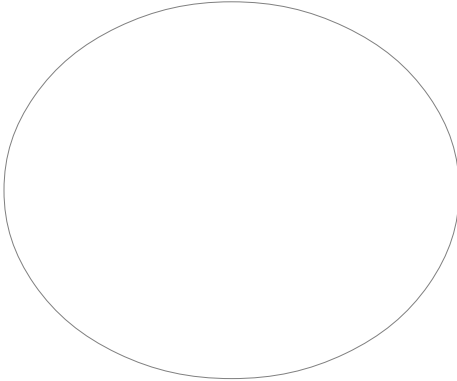
a) autumn leaves crackling under someone's feet


b) a bullfrog's croak

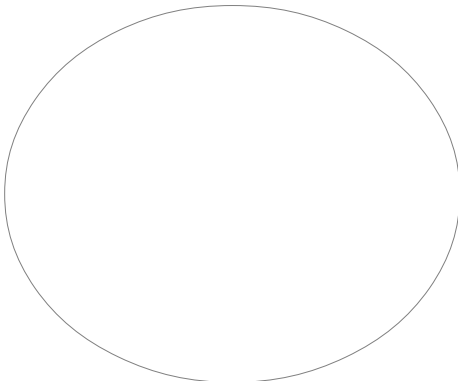

c) your choice


**E. 5 Ws and an H.**

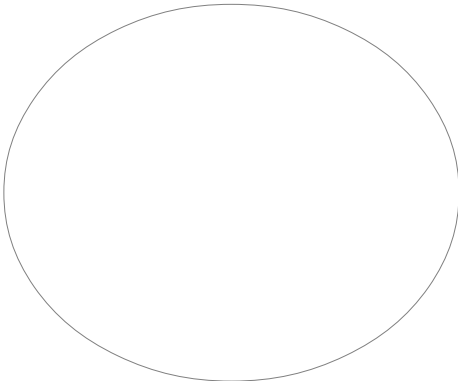
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



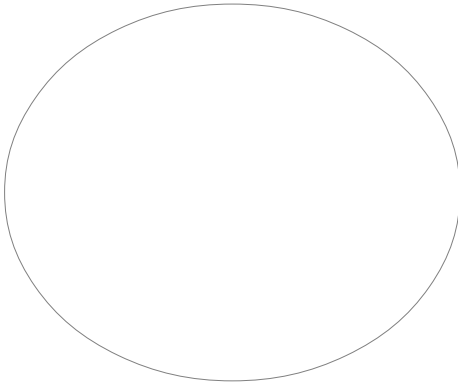
***WHO?***



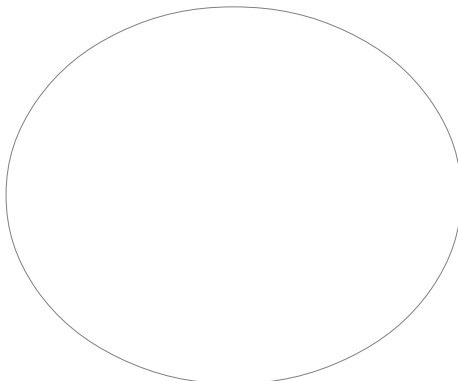
***WHAT?***



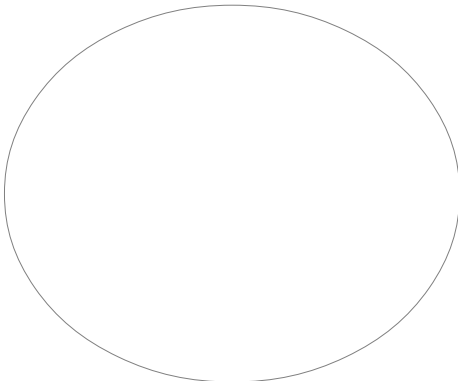
***WHEN?***



***WHERE?***



***WHY?***



***HOW?***

## Extension Activity



### Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene - or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first five chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6